



ACR Environment and Public Policy Section *Quarterly*

SUMMER 2007

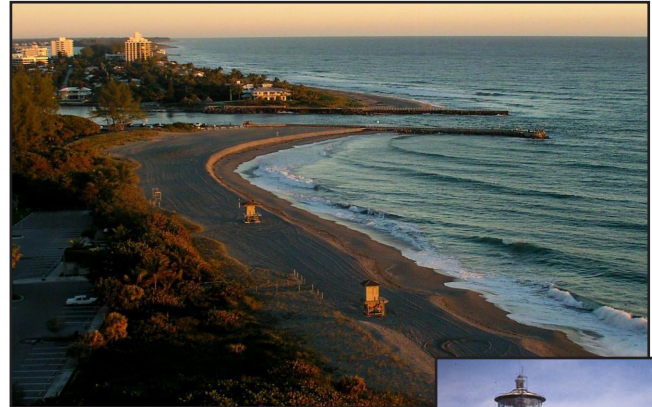
Register Online for EPP Conference: June 7-9, 2007 by John Jostes

Information about the 2007 EPP Section Conference, including registration form, conference brochure, detailed conference program and map of the conference location can be found on the project website www.mediate.com/acrepp.

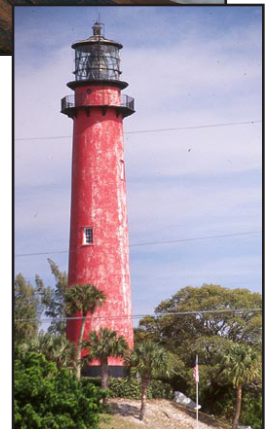
This year's conference will be held on the campus of Florida Atlantic University's Jupiter John D. MacArthur Campus in Jupiter, Florida. It begins in the early afternoon on Thursday, June 7, and ends at noon on Saturday, June 9, 2007.

This year the EPP Conference will be organized to focus on four major themes. These themes include

- Collaborative Leadership and Institutional Change
- Collaborative Leadership and Deliberative Democracy
- Examining the Nature of Our Practice
- Integrating Collaborative Leadership and Practice



*Sunrise in Jupiter, Florida (above)
Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse (right)*



Each theme will be introduced to the participants-at-large by a keynote speaker or invited panel. We will develop these themes in concurrent breakout sessions following each panel or keynote presentation.

Five Principle Approach by Dan Adams

Over the years it has been interesting to listen to my children and my extended family and friends introduce me to others and try to explain what it is that I do. I am sure that many a mediator, facilitator, public involvement practitioner, conflict designer, strategic communicator, and group hugger has experienced this same thing. With a little luck, the definition seems to boil down to the same explanation though: "This

is my son (dad, friend, and husband); he helps bring parties together to solve tough environmental problems."

I have come to believe that what we do boils down to principles of leadership providing opportunities and structure for people to solve problems collaboratively. I have felt for a long time that we need to diversify our approach to

"solving these tough environmental problems". It has been great to see books like *Beyond Neutrality* by Bernie Mayer where a leader "in the field" talks about roles outside of pure third party neutrality. I also was inspired at the 2006 semi-annual EPP conference at M.I.T. where we learned more about Deliberative Democracy and the need to engage a more diverse group of stakeholders, not just policy dialogue but also

see APPROACH on page 4



ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- **Do-it-Yourself Citizen Partnership** page 2
- **Consensus Building and Leadership** page 6
- **Conferences and Dates of Interest** page 13
- **Research Corner** page 14

The ACR EPP Section is always looking for articles and story ideas for the newsletter. Contact the Communication Committee Chair, Bryant Kuechle at (208) 739-3048 or bkuechle@langdongroupinc.com.

Do-it-Yourself Citizen Partnership by John B. Stephens

Your sink is leaking. Are you a do-it-yourself (DIY) repairman, or do you call in an expert? One analyst of citizen participation argues that DIY citizens are pushing aside the experts – including many public administrators – for more engaged and deliberative experiments in civic problem-solving. Is the next development of U.S. democracy going to depend on a Home Depot model more than public administration graduates? Can public administration experts help, or do they simply need to get out of the way, of citizen engagement in the 21st century?

Matt Leighninger makes a provocative argument in his 2006 book *The Next Form of Democracy: How Expert Rule Is Giving Way to Shared Governance -- and Why Politics Will Never Be the Same*. It also demands critical analysis. At the least, Leighninger offers a counterbalance to the dominant thinking on citizen participation: that it is an issue of how public officials and civic leaders can mobilize citizens to satisfy the officials' needs for input. Leighninger presents a number of experiments in civic engagement, separate from elections and the maligned methods of public comment and public hearings.

Across some twenty years, the overlapping fields of conflict resolution, citizen participation, dialogue, and deliberative democracy have spawned an array of models, organizations and practices. These efforts and forms range from the adaptation of administrative procedures,

such as "regulatory negotiation," to broader civic engagement and community problem-solving orientations such as Study Circles (see <http://www.studyircles.org>). Professional organizations vary from the International Association for Public Participation and the International Association of Facilitators, to the Association for Conflict Resolution and the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation. Leighninger is part of the institutionalization, however loose, through the Deliberative Democracy Consortium (see <http://www.deliberative-democracy.net/>). Previously, he was employed by the Study Circles Resource Center, and continues there as a senior associate. Academic study of some of these practices is becoming more prominent, as evidenced by the Public Administration Review special issue on Collaborative Public Management and the inter-disciplinary Collaborative Democracy Network.

Leighninger argues that citizens are pushing hard for shared governance. Moreover, local elected leaders are inclined to join the bandwagon in response to their frustration with gridlock, distrust, and limited resources. "We are leaving the era of expert rule," Leighninger contends, where direct citizen involvement, and real influence, on policies and programs constitute the next evolutionary stage of U.S. democracy.

While public administrators will not be put out of business, the question raised is: How much DIY is possible – and advisable – through

civic organizations, "government by nonprofit" or other bases for community governance separate from government?

Leighninger covers the familiar territory of citizen mistrust of politicians and public managers, and ill-fitting institutionalized forms of participation. He sees most neighborhood associations as awkward hybrids: not enough resources and authority to be a formal institution, but trying to be more than an informal club. Leighninger argues that such intermediate citizen groups need as much, or more, reform than government. Moreover, he neatly summarizes the common vision of "being a good citizen:" someone who is self-sacrificing, worthy, and appreciated by neighbors. He also notes that this is a model most people avoid due to the frustration of time-consuming meetings, dealing with entrenched bureaucracy, and few concrete results.

Leighninger pithily applies the "seven deadly sins" to critique how government officials, civic theorists, and community organizers divide up real people into slices of citizenship. Appeals are made to people in one of seven roles: as voters, consumers, socializers, volunteers, advisors, deliberators, or as dispossessed people. While each slice, or stereotype, is based on good intentions, Leighninger thinks these common citizen participation/mobilization slices obscure the need for citizen involvement to be more holistic and, dare we say, fun.

Leighninger thinks we need to move from discrete experiments to build shared governance institutions at all levels to partner with citizens' issues, needs, and dreams.

He has worked with groups such as the National League of Cities, National School Boards Association, NeighborWorks America, International City/County Management Association, and National School Public Relations Association. He is heartened to see these intermediary associations helping local officials with their experiments. The same groups can assist academics and consultants with their field work.

Several public administration schools are making democratic governance part of their core curriculum, according to Leighninger. He notes a concentration on "Community Leadership and Public Engagement" for master's students at Suffolk University in Boston. Leighninger observes the irony, and potential danger, of the professionalization of the admittedly loose-knit democratic governance field. After all, wasn't the professionalization of planning, public finance, law enforcement, public management, and other fields the cause for alienation between citizens and government?

Many of the goals of dispute resolution and citizen participation are worthy: building the skills of public servants in negotiation and problem-solving, as well as revising the procedures of citizen involvement. Moreover, there is a healthy tension between changing the mechanics of community-government interaction on the one hand, and on the other, a more

activist focus on democratic values, accountability, and justice which leads to protest, civil disobedience, and more adversarial citizen actions. As public administrators in various roles learn from, adapt to, and seek to be "partners" rather than "experts," a few cautions are timely.

There are clear limits to the trend toward shared governance and greater citizen control. First, the tangled web of federal-state-local rules and funding make the government connections to community problems necessarily complex. Shared governance will still have to deal with divided institutional power. Even sophisticated public officials have problems navigating these layers of laws and regulations. Citizens are likely to find these layers even more daunting.

Second, consistency and follow-through will be a stumbling block for maintaining active citizen engagement. Building institutions that effectively cross neighborhood, class, and language divisions will be uneven at best. Leighninger acknowledges this hurdle and notes citizen activist burnout and impatience with one another, even when goals are shared.

Third, Leighninger gives little attention to the concentration of media ownership, including newspapers, for avenues of citizen contact and connectedness. Neighborhood newsletters are useful, and the Internet offers new forms for more local and neighborhood news. The power of bridging people through common news sources is currently one of the weaker dimensions in building shared governance. For

instance, the role radio serves for social and political purposes among many Hispanics in the U.S. seems to be ripe for study and activism in connection with the institutionalization of democratic governance Leighninger promotes.

Finally, how does everyone – regardless of role – wrestle with the hurry-up, divided attention society of the X-box, automated teller, text-messaging, and shopping by phone or computer? There are strong influences toward narrowcasting, rather than broadcasting, and being more selective in our associations rather than encountering people far different from ourselves in a physical, public square. Robert Putnam focuses on these influences, including two-income parents and electronic entertainment, but argues that the greatest factor in the decline of social capital is generational change. Leighninger notes these atomizing influences, and rightfully points to the on-the-ground examples of citizen engagement to show that the modern age of multi-tasking is not an insurmountable barrier.

Leighninger and other shared or collaborative governance analysts and advocates have a lot to offer for how the public administration professional will adapt to more muscular forms of citizen engagement. Balancing his thought-provoking argument with contrary trends and attitudes will be a common challenge for citizens, public servants, and their shared, democratic government.

ASPA member John B. Stephens is an associate professor at the School of Government, UNC at Chapel Hill. E-mail: stephens@sog.unc.edu.

APPROACH continued from page 1

public relations and everything in between.

In meeting with clients such as the Environmental Protection Agency, state Departments of Transportation, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and many others, we continually hear about communities that have tough environmental and infrastructure problems that seem to drag on into perpetuity. We have also heard of communities and agencies that know they have a serious problem but they simply don't have the money or human capital to solve the problem. Often leaders do not want to tackle these tough problems because they:

- Don't want the problem to be made known on their watch.
- Believe that a process to solve the problem will be too expensive.
- Don't want to lose their job or risk losing re-election.
- Intimidated by lack of own personal knowledge about the technical aspects of the given problem.
- Simply do not have the leadership experience or desire.

As people struggle to define what it is we do, indeed as we as a "field" struggle to define what it is that we do, I believe that what we are really doing is modeling leadership and providing opportunities and structure for our clients to collaboratively solve problems. Let me illustrate with an example.

Buhl, Idaho

In January 2005, the EPA fined the City of Buhl \$38,000 for not complying with the discharge limits in

their National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Also, IDEQ would not approve any new connections to the wastewater treatment facility unless the City first put a revenue bond before voters. The bond would fund new wastewater collection and treatment facility improvements and would result in sewer rate increases of up to 360 percent. In addition to wastewater concerns, the city's drinking water system is out of compliance with EPA Safe Drinking Water Act Standards. Test results show an arsenic level above the EPA's approved level.

Since the original construction of its wastewater collection and treatment system in the mid-1960's, the City of Buhl (population approx. 4,000) has experienced steady residential, commercial, and industrial growth, and anticipates continued development in the future. As growth occurs, the City has become increasingly concerned about the ability of the wastewater facilities to meet the current and future community wastewater needs and to remain in compliance with Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations. After being made aware of this situation, we met with the mayor of Buhl and offered that we could design a process that would help Buhl to solve this tough environmental problem.

The process that we designed is probably not terribly unique. Some of the tools we used included:

- Partnering.
- Initial assessment and commu-

nity and agency interviews.

- Agency coordination and process buy-in.
- State and federal elected official coordination.
- Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).
- Site tours.
- Development of evaluation criteria and alternatives.
- Selection of a preferred alternative.
- Community involvement and outreach.
- Media relations.
- Civic group presentations.

After going through this public involvement and facilitation process the community solution to the community problem was to build a mechanical wastewater treatment plant. The best engineering estimates were at \$15,000,000.00 to fix the wastewater problem and \$8,000,000.00 to fix the arsenic in the drinking water.

The city and the Citizen Advisory Committee asked that we continue to help the community by seeking funding. We brought in experts in funding from the Environmental Finance Center, local grant writers, and funding expertise from the EPA and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to help educate the public about rate increases, appropriations, and the funding process. The community decided to pursue a bond election and asked that we help them to continue the outreach and education effort to the entire community. This was true deliberative democracy!

The Langdon Group conducted informational presentations and

question/answer sessions with city civic groups, a media outreach campaign, distributed print materials to the voting public, and called on a citizens advisory committee to participate in the campaign.

The community outreach and community solution to a community problem resulted in more than two-thirds of voters approving the \$15 million wastewater bond and the \$8 million drinking water bonds - despite the fact that passage of the wastewater bond would raise user rates to an estimated \$35-\$65 per month. Current monthly user fees were \$18.

Five Principle Approach

What emerged from this process were Five Principles for effectively engaging and solving tough environmental and infrastructure problems:

1. Planning
2. Engineering
3. Environmental
4. Funding
5. Public Involvement

The keys to the Five Principles working effectively are early involvement and local leadership. This again goes to our effectively educating clients and would be clients in what we do. The title "public involvement" is inherently problematic because it does not properly convey what we do. People often think of an open house or a public hearing when they hear the words, public involvement. We need to meet with

regulatory agencies and decision makers who may use our services and let them know more of the depth and breadth of what we do. Decision makers hire us because they have a problem that they need to have solved. It is our responsibility to educate them as to what we can do.

What I have found from meeting with agencies, special interest

struction, clean up, final decision making, etc.) does not take place. It is frustrating to go work with a group of stakeholders and have them wonder why they should engage in a process because they have little or no hope that results will ever take place. I have often heard, "We have been talking about this for years but nothing ever happens." I believe and have seen where if the Five Principles are applied, the

odds of a project going from concept to completion are radically heightened. We are always looking for ways to streamline the environmental process and I believe that by helping our clients and stakeholders to effectively address all five principles early, we can achieve effective results.

Since working in Buhl, we have used a similar approach to help

two other rural communities with environmental issues resolve similar problems. We have also learned from regulatory agencies that there are well over 100 similar communities in Idaho alone with similar wastewater and water violations that need our help. In developing and defining the Five Principle Approach we have been able to provide a model for community leaders to give them hope that there is a process to help them resolve their environmental and infrastructure problems.

Dan Adams is the Director of The Langdon Group in Boise, Idaho. Email: dadams@langdongroupinc.com.



groups and community leaders is that the Five Principle Approach is an easy model that they can use to effectively see how they need to approach their given environmental problem. It helps them to look at environmental problems holistically.

When I learn about projects that have gone poorly, very often it is because there was not an effective partnering process at outset and then other issues that derail the project are almost always tied to one of the Five Principles.

I have also personally experienced and witnessed great projects where deliberative democracy takes place, stakeholders are effectively engaged, and then actual results (con-

Consensus Building and Leadership:

The Contributions of Public Conflict Resolution Practitioners by John B. Stevens

Introduction

As the public administration field deepens and broadens its focus on consensus building and leadership, I offer this paper in the spirit of a courier bringing news from another village. While I have been a part of the UNC-Chapel Hill MPA program since 1997, my first home is public conflict resolution as a profession of practice, as well as teaching and research. I will define “my village” of public conflict resolution (PCR, which includes some mainstream public administration academics and practitioners) and describe the PCR practitioners’ contributions on consensus building and leadership of interest to the public administration field.

Who are PCR practitioners?

My definition has three prongs: general and conceptual, identification of key publications, and organizational membership. In the broadest sense PCR practitioners are mediators or facilitators who help groups cooperatively address public issues involving local, state or federal government entities. Their specialization distinguishes them from divorce mediators and labor/management mediators. Most PCR practitioners do not identify with international diplomacy and conflict resolution, such as Jimmy Carter and United Nations officials who work for peace when wars threaten to break out across national borders. Similar to other mediators, PCR practitioners help stakeholders communicate and problem solve. They are experts in group dynamics and are expected to guide a process, but not as a chairman or an invitation-maker who has some kind of interest in the substantive outcome of a dispute. PCR practitioners are often termed neutral process experts.

There can be critiques about how “neutral” anyone can be on issues such as environmental protection, health care, land use decisions and other matters on which PCR practitioners work. Practitioners, and associated PCR researchers and teachers, argue over whether neutrality is really the right concept and term for this separate role. At the very least, they are defined—by themselves and by the interested stakeholders—as helping the whole group to maximize the satisfaction of

participants, rather than to advocate for any particular interest.

PCR practice may overlap with other roles and areas of expertise:

1. Public involvement/citizen participation
2. Dialogue
3. Deliberative democracy
4. Facilitation and organizational change.

Moreover, researchers and commentators on collaborative democracy, collaborative public management and deliberative democracy have argued the public administrators in appointed and elected roles should have many of the skills of PCR practitioners. For our purposes, the core of PCR generic practice is assisting in an agreement-seeking process where stakeholders voluntarily participate. In short, PCR can be defined negatively: it is not seeking a resolution in court, it is not a patina on pluralistic politics, and it is not routine citizen or interest group advocacy efforts to influence a decision-making entity.

Publications

I argue that the bulk of PCR practitioners have medium to high acquaintance with two documents that define the practice, specify competencies, and describe guidelines for use. They were developed by PCR practitioners under the aegis of SPIDR, the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, Environmental/Public Disputes Sector. SPIDR merged with two other organizations in 2001 to form the Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) and the SPIDR Environmental/Public Disputes Sector continued as the ACR Environment and Public Policy Section.

The documents are:

1. Competencies for Mediators of Complex Public Disputes (An Overview Developed by the Environmental/Public Disputes Sector). 1992.
2. Best Practices for Government Agencies: Guidelines for Using Collaborative Agreement-Seeking Processes. (Report and Recommendations of the SPIDR Environmental/Public Disputes Sector Critical Issues Committee). 1997.

In terms of more widely read publications, the most recognizable strand of PCR is the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) movement. Thus, the book *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher and William Ury is the simplest touchstone for many PCR practitioners. However, since interest-based negotiation is widely practiced, PCR is narrowed by three other books from the mid-1980s:

1. *Resolving Environmental Disputes: A Decade of Experience* by Gail Bingham,
2. *Managing Public Disputes* by Susan Carpenter and Bill Kennedy, and
3. *Breaking the Impasse: Consensual Approaches to Resolving Public Disputes* by Larry Susskind and Jeffrey Cruikshank.

From the earliest times, PCR has been associated with environmental and land use controversies. There is now a sizable literature about environmental conflict resolution and collaboration, with a significant strands related to leadership and sustainability. One setting for PCR is regulatory negotiation, which has its own literature of proponents and critics. Lesser known, but a strong early fit between PCR and public administration is a 1994 ICMA publication, *Resolving Conflict: Strategies for Local Government*. Subsequently, certain state-level guidebooks appeared for collaboration/conflict resolution on public policy issues (e.g., Massachusetts, Oregon, Montana, and North Carolina).

The most recent touchstone publications range from a massive consensus-building compendium to a consciously spartan guide for high-level administrators and elected officials. In terms of a comprehensive study of the development of the field, the most recent offering I have located was published in 1996. In the rapidly evolving PCR field, that is like returning to the time of 45-rpm vinyl records. For instance, a 2005 grantmakers guide on environmental conflict resolution offers 15 books published since 1996.

Organizational membership

PCR practitioners tend to have the same figurative watering holes. To complete my definition of who counts as a PCR practitioner, I will identify professional associations, specific organizations, and one federal agency that maintains a roster of PCR/environmental

conflict resolution practitioners.

For professional associations, the ACR Section on Environment and Public Policy Disputes dates from 1983. Given its efforts on the competencies and guidance for government conveners, cited above, it is a fulcrum of PCR practice, although many PCR practitioners are not members. Other PCR practitioners may in addition (or instead) be affiliated with the American Bar Associations Section of Dispute Resolution (<http://www.abanet.org/dispute/>) the International Association of Facilitators (<http://www.iaf-world.org>), or the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2, www.iap2.org). Two newer organizations with similar interests, but some different values and approaches, are the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (<http://www.thataway.org/>) and the Deliberative Democracy Consortium (<http://www.deliberative-democracy.net/>).

In terms of longevity, specific nonprofit and university-based programs are well-known in the field: CDR Associates, the Consensus Building Institute, Inc., the Keystone Center for Science & Public Policy, Resolve, Triangle Associates, Inc., Meridian Institute, Concur, Inc., and the Institute for Environmental Negotiation at the University of Virginia. These entities have their own staff, and many also use formal or informal affiliates on particular projects. Other early PCR practitioners are in smaller groupings or now work as solo practitioners.

In the 1980s, the National Institute for Dispute Resolution seeded "state offices of dispute resolution," several of which continue their work today. Some states have more than one entity, usually linked to a university, housing PCR practitioners and a larger network of affiliates. Several community mediation centers have PCR experience at the neighborhood, city and regional, state, and federal agency levels.

At the federal level, the U.S. EPA, Federal Highway Administration, and Department of Interior have staff dedicated to public engagement and conflict resolution, and other agencies' ADR work sometimes extends to policy and regulatory development matters. The more recent, and biggest federal player is the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, (USIECR) associated with the Morris K. Udall Foundation (<http://www.ecr.gov/>). USIECR maintains a

national roster of environmental dispute resolution and consensus building professionals (with 264 members) and provides consultation and referral services to PCR connected to any federal agency on an environmental matter.

Contributions of PCR Practitioners

For highlighting the kind contributions from the PCR filed, I will try to steer clear of items generated by PCR practitioners who are based in universities and write for a more academic audience. For example, Conflict Resolution Quarterly, while of benefit to the members of ACR, which is largely made up of practitioners, has a peer-review process and standards more aligned with academic journals. From the public administration field, the strongest, most recent example of material closely related to PCR is the Public Administration Review Special Issue on Collaborative Public Management. O'Leary and Bingham are both academically grounded and active in PCR practice. Thus, there will be some inevitable overlap when I cite PCR practitioners' contributions of interest to public administration for consensus building and leadership. For instance, another project involving O'Leary was aimed at grantmakers in environmental conflict resolution, but lists resources which include university programs, books, and articles.

Enumerating the contributions begins with development of mediation/facilitation applied to public policy and regulatory development, facilitation of complex program management and concomitant publications to guide practice. My coverage then moves to a cluster of education, awareness, communication and training activities; next to documentation of cases and some comparative studies; provider organization and other institution building; and finally some degree of interweaving of PCR practice with public participation, deliberative democracy and related civic practices.

1. Development of Practice

Much of the on-the-ground work of PCR developed out of ADR, negotiation theory, sociology and a large dose of figuring-out-the-politics of particular situations. The negotiated Investment Strategy was applied to redevelopment efforts and then other topics. Negotiated rulemaking (also known as regulatory

negotiation) began as an experiment, and then was codified at the federal level, with some similar state-level legislation. There has been extensive focus on how to assess whether consensus-building processes are advisable. This situation assessment phase – akin to diagnosis in the health care field – benefited from practical research and exchange among practitioners.

While negotiated rulemaking provides statutory guidance for particular applications, most PCR efforts are custom-designed following principles noted above (i.e., Best Practices for Government Agencies: Guidelines for Using Collaborative Agreement-Seeking Processes). The Internet age of input included experiments for developing rules using online platforms.

As described below, the breadth of work is impressive for a civic practice field that is barely 35 years old. One measure of the diversity of substantive topics, scope, and processes is The Consensus Building Handbook's coverage of 17 cases. The topics addressed by this selection of cases include local public health, affordable housing, community visioning and redevelopment, superfund clean-up, state-level HIV/AIDS policies and priorities, and church-level organizational trauma recovery.

It is difficult to separate the PCR contribution from leadership seminars, programs of professional associations and other influences on public administration. However, to take one example, twenty years of PCR services by the Dispute Settlement Center (DSC) in Carrboro, North Carolina, has created wide understanding and use of PCR, and integration of PCR concepts and values into Orange County municipal and county governments. This infrastructure provides continuing innovations in PCR models. Most recently, concerning a dispute over the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's plans to convert a small airport and hundreds of acres of wooded land into a new "north campus," the DSC contracted to provide a coach for the chair/facilitator of the stakeholder group. While many group leaders receive informal guidance from PCR practitioners, this is one of the few structured arrangements I am aware of for moving from being an outside facilitator to forming a chair-facilitation advisor approach to process design and meeting conduct.

2. Guidance for practice

Unsurprisingly, practitioners want potential clients to know how to use their services. The competencies and best practices documents were noted above. Another guide for practice resides in the qualifications for the USIECR Roster of ECR Practitioners. This is a clear model that accounts for case experience, interactive process training, and substantive education and experience in a point system to determine eligibility to be on the roster.

Several other written guides exist, ranging from a generalist guide for political/civic leaders seeking consensus, to addressing the role of powerful persons or groups to “convene,” i.e., to help initiate a consensus-building process, but not to join the stakeholders in the detailed discussions. One online resource was originally developed for federal leaders to provide “a general introduction to environmental conflict resolution (ECR), including definitions, applications, examples, strengths and constraints.” Whereas most guides have focused on conveners, who are usually government officials, one very useful contribution was co-developed by a PCR organization and two environmental advocacy groups (the National Audubon Society and The Wilderness Society) to guide, and caution, environmental activists about stakeholder consensus-building processes.

I think the most intriguing guidance document comes from the work of PCR practitioners and high-level Canadian government administrators. Centered on the need to form public policy that blends economic and environmental sustainability, provincial ministers and other top government officials first defined principles for sustainability. Next, PCR practitioners elaborated and illustrated those principles by summarizing many PCR cases in Canada.

Similarly, a guide for state and local public officials focuses specifically on land use mediation, while an Oregon handbook addresses resource managers, resource management councils as well as land use planners about “collaborative approaches to decisionmaking.” One online resource provides general guidance for those “responsible for organizing a consensus-building process.”

Recently, a teleconference of senior environmental and public policy mediators addressed the federal

government setting for developing collaborative leaders. A summary of the exchange is one example of PCR practice seeking to inform collaborative leadership. The session involved senior PCR practitioners presenting their reflections on competencies, and a group of federal officials responding with questions and comments.

Finally, topics such as racial and cultural conflict, science and other approaches to “knowledge,” and consensus-building when the science is contested, have been addressed with binocular vision: helping PCR practitioners consider best practices, but also intended for civic leaders (and potential clients) to understand the utility of PCR.

3. Awareness and Education

Overlapping somewhat with the guidance for PCR practitioners and potential clients, are effort to create awareness of consensus-building in the public policy realm. In turn, awareness contributes to leaders using consensus-building processes. Beyond the publications already mentioned, training has been a big part of many PCR organizations for over two decades. Again, it is difficult to separate the influence of “PCR training” from the work of many training groups and programs in the public administration arena. For example, organizational development consultants often model, and teach, group facilitation as one tool for improved effectiveness.

Many groups teach negotiation and problem-solving. But even limiting the scope to the larger PCR organizations, thousands of nonprofit and government administrators have been exposed to specific PCR skills, and models of PCR engagement. I am not including PCR practitioners in their roles of teaching in degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate or professional school levels. Similarly, newsletters, reports to particular audiences, overviews on websites, and awards have all been part of the panoply of PCR awareness efforts.

4. Organization of Providers – Rosters

An area of practice is only reliable if potential users find potential providers. The creation of rosters of PCR providers draws on the ADR and arbitration models of setting qualifications and then designating which practitioners meet the standards. I have already

mentioned the USIECR roster, but an earlier roster was created by the U.S. EPA and managed first by RESOLVE, and now by SRA, International. Various states' government agencies have different approaches to rosters, affiliates or referral systems. In contrast, the ACR-EPP Section is open to any ACR member: there is not a qualification of training or experience to be a section member.

5. Cases, reflection, and analysis

Specific PCR cases have been compiled and published in various forms. The earliest was the review by Bingham of over 150 cases in environmental conflict resolution. Beyond many books that report on cases in various forms, there are websites that try to catalogue cases from different providers. The Community-Based Collaboratives Research Consortium database is notable, since it emphasizes stakeholder/lay interests in community-based collaborative efforts, and tries to bridge to the interests of PCR practitioners and academics.

In turn, casework has fostered the analysis of practice more broadly. Many of these contributions emanate from PCR experts in academic roles. However, it is impressive how PCR practitioners who do not have the academic base, incentives or resources, regularly make thoughtful contributions to the field.

6. Institutions

I attribute a range of institutions to PCR practitioners. I believe the influence of PCR practice is very clear on some organizations, and is arguable in others. At the least, PCR-related laws, agencies and organizations have developed without a NAPA-style recommendation for state- and federal-level bodies to perform and evaluate PCR.

First institutionalization includes the practitioners' professional bodies, as noted above: ACR-EPP, IAP2, IAF, etc. Second, state offices of dispute resolution are largely attributable to state leaders and the grant funding and technical assistance from the National Institute for Dispute Resolution (NIDR) in the 1980s and 1990s. These have different kinds of set-ups, state by state, and some bodies developed independently of the NIDR model of seeding new offices. Some states, in turn, passed enabling legislation for ADR in administrative procedures and/or for developing regulations.

Federal institutionalization includes distinct offices within federal agencies, two statutes, and the

establishment of the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, (USIECR) in 1998. Further institutional impact could result from the work of USIECR in two areas. First, prompted by a bipartisan group of U.S. senators, USIECR reported on "strategies for using collaboration, consensus building, and dispute resolution to achieve the substantive goals" of the National Environmental Policy Act, and to "resolve environmental policy issues..." Second, in 2005, a joint memorandum from the Office of Management and Budget and the President's Council on Environmental Quality addressed "Basic Principles for Agency Engagement in Environmental Conflict Resolution and Collaborative Problem Solving." USIECR and other PCR leaders played important roles in the development, and the ongoing implementation, of this directive.

7. Connections with other venues and related goals

Of the various ways PCR could be compared and contrasted to deliberative democracy, citizen participation, and other forums of thought and action, I will simply point to three ways the PCR practitioners (again, loosely distinguished from public administration scholars and practitioners) have made useful connections on matters of practice and model building.

First, citizen participation is the most direct connection with PCR, in my view. PCR calls on stakeholders to seek consensus. Stakeholders are expected to represent interests of some broader interest group, profession, community, etc. Thus, PCR is very often a form of participation in policymaking. Susan Carpenter and Desmond Connor offered a nice description of one project where citizen participation and PCR steps and techniques were blended. Connor went on to offer an update on the well-known "ladder of participation" originally created in 1969 by Sherry Arnstein. More recently, the Meridian Institute touts its services for online dialogue and consensus building, and improved decision-making through proprietary software.

Second, PCR practitioners have made connections to civil society development in formerly repressive societies or "democratizing" nations. The best known organization, with American roots, is Partners for Democratic Change, with "Centers for Change & Conflict Management" in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Georgia and Jordan. Other international PCR-related efforts extend to counteracting media that foment and heighten tensions with radio and TV shows that embed

cooperative PCR principles in stories designed for mass consumption.

Finally, one long-time practitioner, theorist and advocate, William Ury, has coined the term “third side” to identify ten roles that can contribute to more peaceful, just resolutions of conflict. The general theme is to acknowledge the reality and necessity of conflict, but to use ADR/PCR tools (and other methods) to prevent, resolve and contain conflict before (or after) reaching destructive and violent levels. His model is intended to apply from the interpersonal to the global levels.

These seven areas of PCR contributions to key elements of consensus-building and leadership are impressive. I think they are almost equally unknown to many public administration officials and academics working in the closely allied areas of citizen participation, deliberative democracy, and collaborative management.

Wearing a Pracademic’s Hat: Three Questions

From the beginning, I noted the challenge of wholly separating PCR practitioners from PCR teachers, researchers and scholars. There is certainly an overlap. The overlap may be getting stronger. This interface is both an opportunity and a challenge. While there is more than a critical mass of public administration scholarship and practice centered on citizen participation, collaboration, conflict resolution and cooperative/deliberative parts of civic life, I pose three questions:

1. How can useful analytical boundaries be identified about the scope of work, purpose, and participants in consensus-building and leadership that do not hinder innovation and experimentation?
2. How can rigorous research best inform practice?
3. How can pracademics find appropriate incentives and rewards for field work that is often contingent, uncertain and not always a clearly defined “case”?

Analytic boundaries and innovation

I oscillate between the excitement of examining and pulling together the many strands of practice and research on one hand, and getting lost in the acronyms, cases and organizations on the other. On the excitement side, Internet forums, (including such

virtual worlds as Second Life) hold new power to reach widely, to engage people voluntarily, and to possibly offer new venues to overcome the stratification of public participation and PCR by class, education, race, gender, nationality and age. I see inklings of deeper civic engagement in the neighborhood and citizen academies, and youth commissions, at the local government level. Finally, it seems many scholars and practitioners are exploring (and arguing over) various models of deliberation that try to embrace reason and emotion in decisionmaking, and address the almost inevitable trade-off between the number of participants and the depth of the discussions.

On the other side, the plethora of organizations and approaches seems to lack a coherent framework. NCDD, DDC, IAP2, ACR-EPP, IAF, and CDN – all of these combine various levels of intellectual and/or academic rigor with seat-of-the-pants field applications. I think the cacophony will continue for some time, although there are some organizing frameworks. It is unclear how much agreement can be reached on the exact range of values embedded in PCR/deliberative democracy, the appropriate roles of government and other actors for directing particular efforts, and the range of outcomes to measure and distinguish a stakeholder consensus process from the impact of socialization, communication/media context, and other (often concurrent) forms of participation and influence.

One much discussed boundary is the difference between agreement-seeking processes (one key element of consensus-building) and other valuable ways to engage stakeholders that is not, at least explicitly, about coming to agreement. My way of summarizing this boundary for government officials is contrasting the primary goal(s) for mediation (which is agreement-seeking) and facilitation (which often is one or more of: education, exploring interests, gathering information, promoting involvement, and improving communication and relationships among stakeholders). In practice, even the most initial exploration of views and ideas often plants the seeds for later agreement. And, conversely, explicitly agreement-seeking (consensus-building) efforts involve some degree of others goals/needs which create value in the exchange even if agreement is not reached.

One example of trying to integrate PCR into traditional

public administration concerns comes from Epstein, Coast and Wray (1996). They offer an effective community governance model that places “community problem solving” as an alignment of engaging citizen and getting things done, and links both engagement and getting things done to performance measurement.

Research findings and practice

What I find most encouraging about PCR is an early and continuous strand focused on rigorous analysis, sharing experience and scholarship. Of course, some of this “practical scholarship” can be traced to academic practitioners pursuing their interests and incentives. But just to take two organizations not tightly affiliated with a single academic home—RESOLVE and Meridian—each have offered many reports, evaluations, and other contributions applicable to academic interests.

Alternatively, my concern is that because the variables on any particular PCR/deliberative democracy effort are so multifaceted, practitioners will continue to be suspect of studies of just a few dimensions claiming firm explanations of outcomes and degrees of success. While researchers cannot analyze every potential factor effectively, the selectivity of research to build knowledge seems poignant in this case. Is PCR/deliberative democracy about education? Communication? Decision-making? Power and negotiation? Each strand poses different questions and needs.

One promising hybrid appears to be the Community-Based Collaboratives Research Consortium, with its mix of stakeholders seeking both near-term guidance at the micro- and meso-levels, and theory building at the macro-level.

Practice, academic needs, and messy field work

For more than selfish reasons, the question of how much energy to devote to practice – usually termed service, and often ranked at the bottom of the university rewards structure – is not inconsiderable for academicians. Fortunately, there is a strong trail of professors who have made it work in one form or another. From the earliest days, the Consensus Building Institute has been “affiliated with MIT, the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, the MIT-Harvard Public Disputes Program, and other

academic institutions through its founders, Lawrence Susskind, board members, staff, and clients.” The Policy Consensus Initiative (based at Portland State University) is working with several universities’ staff and faculty for convening and supporting PCR at the state level. An analyst of the deliberative democracy movement sees “a handful” of academic programs in the PCR/citizen engagement area. One recently created center has the brief description that seems to pull it all together:

University of Arkansas - Little Rock, Institute of Government: The new Center for Public Conflict Solutions, directed by Ruth Craw, was created this year in order to assist community agencies and organizations in resolving conflict and finding long-lasting solutions for public issue challenges. The Center will also promote citizen participation in public policy and educate state leaders in collaborative decision making. The Center for Nonprofit Organizations, headed by Kim Evans will provide assistance for nonprofit organizations in accessing university and state resources.

One final way to bridge academically-rewarded field work is to investigate the changing expectations, duties and skills of public administrators through profiles and case studies that harkens back to well-regarded scholarship. To cite just two PCR colleagues who are now public administrators:

1. Susan Schiller has worked as both an independent PCR practitioner and now is on the Ontario Municipal Board. The Board helps people resolve their differences on community planning issues through a public forum for resolving disagreements.
2. Wendy Foxmyn has directed a local mediation center, worked as a consultant, and now is a Massachusetts assistant town administrator. Similarly, the MPA and MPP graduates are going to PCR organizations.

Conclusion

I have summarized seven ways in which PCR practitioners have contributed to consensus-building and leadership. Some of this field work has attracted the attention of public administration researchers. More interchange would be fruitful for practice, research and theory.

Conferences and Dates of Interest by Catherine McCracken

**Note: Information correct as of early May 2007 – be sure to confirm via organization websites.*

Policy Consensus Initiative Workshops for University Centers and State Programs: The Role of University Centers in Collaborative Governance

June 6-7, 2007
Florida Atlantic University, Jupiter, Florida
(in conjunction with EPP Mid-Year Conference)
For more information: www.policyconsensus.org/events

Environment & Public Policy Section Conference

June 7-9, 2007
Florida Atlantic University, Jupiter, Florida
For more information and registration: www.mediate.com/acrepp

Call for Proposals Deadline – June 14, 2007

International Association for Public Participation Skills Symposium
(for November 12-16, 2007 Skills Symposium, Scottsdale, Arizona)
For more information: www.iap2.org

Why Dialogue? (and when, and how, and where?)

June 15-16, 2007
Marymount Manhattan College, New York, New York
For more information and registration: www.networkforpeace.com

10th Annual U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Community Involvement Conference and

Training

June 19-22, 2007
Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront Hotel, Jacksonville, Florida
For more information: www.epa.gov/superfund/action/community/ciconference

International Association of Facilitators

July 25-27, 2007 (Asia Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
October 5-7, (Europe Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland)
October 25-26, 2007 (Africa Conference, Johannesburg, South Africa)
November 28-30, 2007 (Australia/New Zealand Conference, Adelaide, South Australia)
April 10-12, 2008 (North America Conference, Atlanta, Georgia)
For more information: www.iaf-world.org

American Bar Association Annual Meeting

August 9-14, 2007
San Francisco, CA
For more information: www.abanet.org/mtd

Association for Conflict Resolution - Conflict Resolution Day

October 18, 2007
For more information: www.acrnet.org/crday

7th Annual Association for Conflict Resolution Conference

October 24-27, 2007
Hyatt Regency, Phoenix, Arizona
For more information: www.acrnet.org/conferences
Also: ACR Master Calendar at www.acrnet.org/webcal

International Association for Public Participation Skills Symposium: A Festival of Training and Discovery

November 12-16, 2007
Chaparral Suites Resort, Scottsdale, Arizona
For more information: www.iap2.org

Canadian Community for Dialogue and Deliberation Conference & Training

November 12-16, 2007
Vancouver, British Columbia
For more information and registration: <http://c2d2.dialoguecircles.com>

Interaction 2008 - Conflict Resolution Network Canada Biennial Conference

May 7-9, 2008
Ottawa, Ontario
Suggestions for conference theme and workshop ideas can be sent to: crnetwork@crnetwork.ca
For more information: www.crnetwork.ca

U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution National Conference

Spring 2008 (specific dates available soon)
For more information: www.ecr.gov

4th National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation Conference

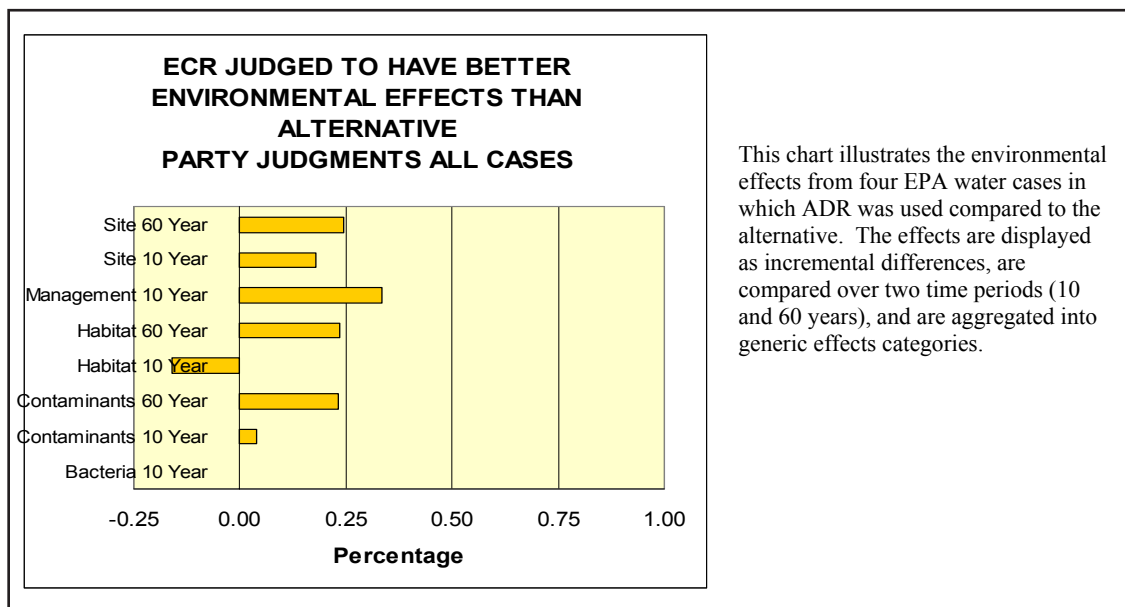
October 3-5, 2008
Austin, Texas
For more information: www.thataway.org

Research Corner by Nick White

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Conflict Prevention and Resolution Center and the U.S. Department of Interior's (DOI) Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution have a joint research project with the goal of quantifying the impacts of using environmental conflict resolution processes; Systematic Evaluation of Environmental and Economic Results (SEEER).

SEEER is an effort to systematically compare the environmental and economic results of environmental conflict resolution (ECR) to its alternatives. This project is of particular relevance for practitioners since "The findings of SEEER may assist public decision makers and other stakeholders determine how to address important environmental and natural resource issues and whether ECR may be appropriate in a given situation."

A four page pdf document created by the EPA and DOI describes the SEEER project, http://.ecr.gov/pdf/SEEER_Overview.pdf. The following example shows the type of information the SEEER evaluation methodology can produce.



Environment and Public Policy Leadership Council Members

Cindy Cook, Co-Chair 2005-2007
ccook@adamantaccord.com

Michael Elliott, Co-Chair 2006-2008
michael.elliott@coa.gatech.edu

John Stephens, Immediate Past Co-Chair
stephens@sog.unc.edu

Juliana Birkhoff, Co-Chair, Diversity Mentoring Project
jbirkhoff@resolv.org

Nicholas Dewar, Elected Member
ndewar@igc.org

Steve Garon, Elected Member
Stephen_garon@sra.com

John Jostes, Acting Chair, Conference Planning Committee
john@interactiveplans.com

Bryant J. Kuechle, Chair, Communications Committee
bkuechle@langdongroupinc.com

Mary Orton, Elected Member
mary@maryorton.com

Harry Manasewich, Chair, Advanced Practitioner Committee
hfactor@dr@aol.com

Carolyn Penny, Elected Member
cpenny@unexmail.ucdavis.edu

ACR EPP Section Communication Committee: *Bryant Kuechle (Chair), Mary Orton, Robyn Moore-Johnson, Robin Harkless, Nick White, Forsyth Kineon, Ed Moreno, Catherine McCracken.*